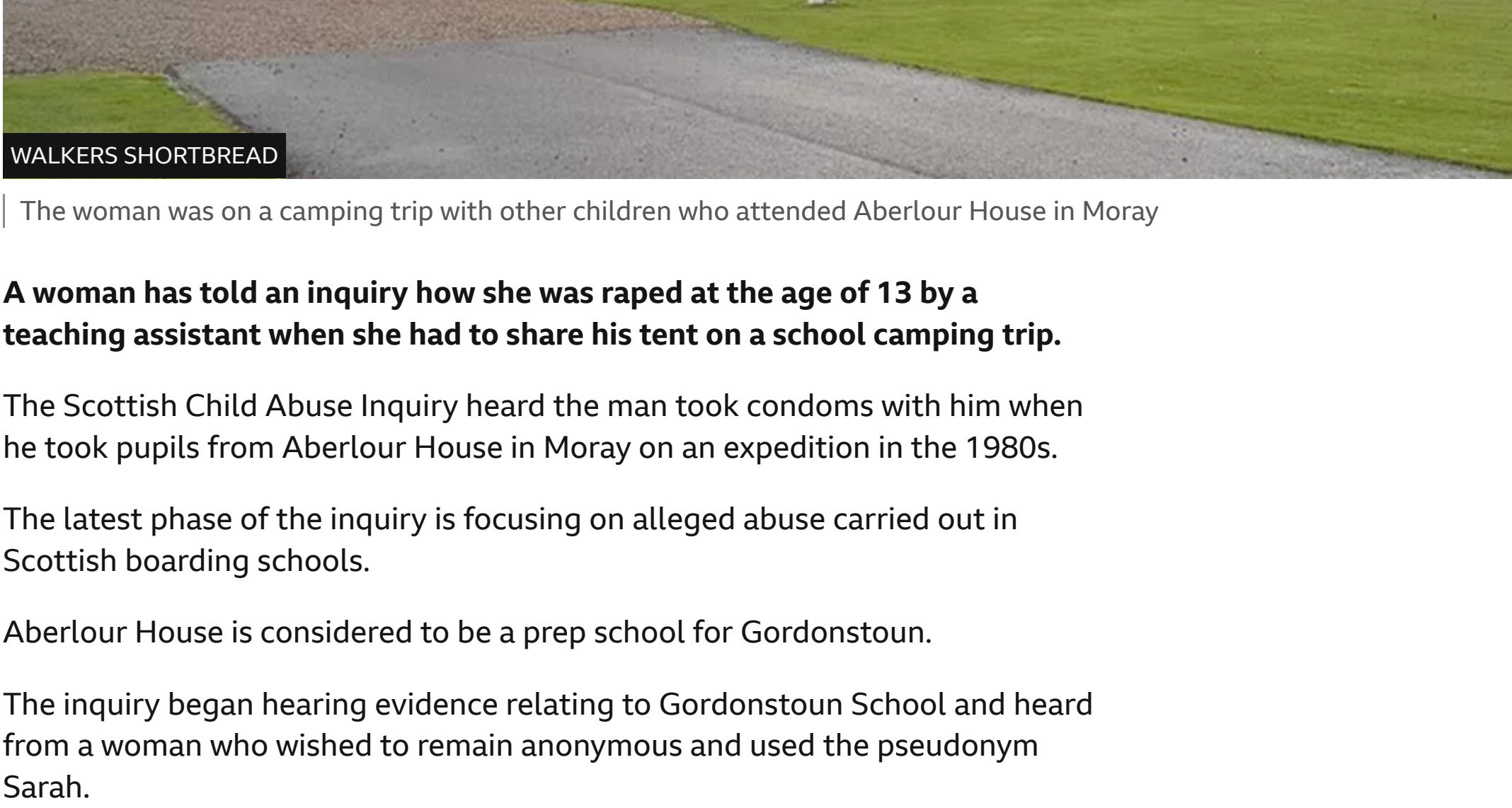


Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry: Child raped in tent on school trip

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Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry



WALKERS SHOT/BREARD

| The woman was on a camping trip with other children who attended Aberlour House in Moray

A woman has told an inquiry how she was raped at the age of 13 by a teaching assistant when she had to share his tent on a school camping trip.

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry heard the man took condoms with him when he took pupils from Aberlour House in Moray on an expedition in the 1980s.

The latest phase of the inquiry is focusing on alleged abuse carried out in Scottish boarding schools.

Aberlour House is considered to be a prep school for Gordonstoun.

The inquiry began hearing evidence relating to Gordonstoun School and heard from a woman who wished to remain anonymous and used the pseudonym Sarah.

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She said that in her last year at Aberlour House she went on a camping expedition with a group of 10 to 15 pupils. When they arrived, it was discovered the group was one tent short.

As a result, it was decided that some pupils would have to share a tent with the man leading the expedition, who was aged 19 or 20, and they would take it in turns to sleep in his tent.

Andrew Brown QC, counsel to the inquiry, said: "On the first night, you and two other girls shared the tent with him and he began to do things. They left and he raped you."

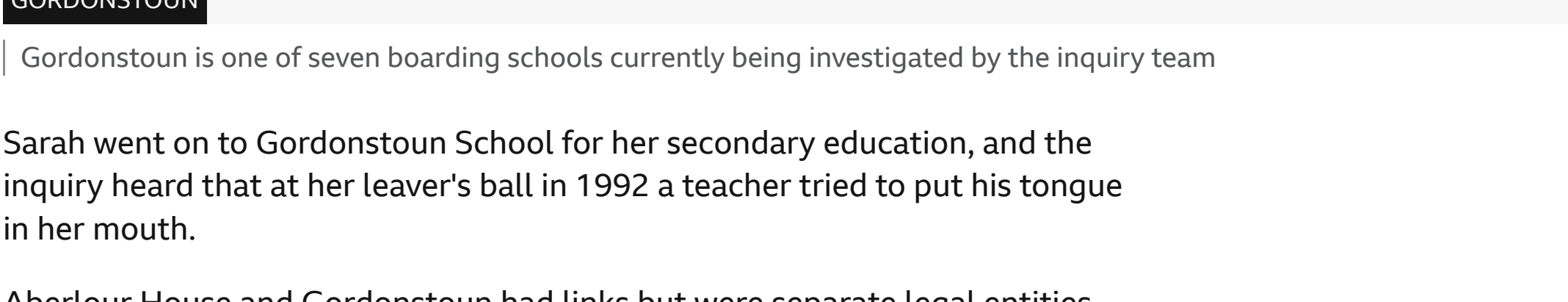
Sarah replied: "Yes".

The inquiry also heard that other children knew she had been raped and she said she was bullied because of what had happened.

Asked why she thought the expedition was found to be one tent short when they arrived at their destination, she said: "I think he probably did it deliberately."

Mr Brown asked: "One of the things he did was to bring condoms with him on a camping trip with children?"

"Yes," she replied.



GORDONSTOUN

| Gordonstoun is one of seven boarding schools currently being investigated by the inquiry team

Sarah went on to Gordonstoun School for her secondary education, and the inquiry heard that at her leaver's ball in 1992 a teacher tried to put his tongue in her mouth.

Aberlour House and Gordonstoun had links but were separate legal entities until they merged in 1999.

Gordonstoun School said: "Although Gordonstoun cannot answer formally for Aberlour House before 1999, we are providing as much information as we can to the inquiry and have already taken the opportunity at the inquiry of offering an apology to anyone who suffered abuse there."

The inquiry also heard from a woman using the pseudonym Annie who attended Gordonstoun for her sixth form years between 1986 and 1988.

She said that one male member of staff kissed her on her cheek and forehead between five and 10 times, which disturbed her.

Annie said: "It was definitely wrong and inappropriate, even around that time that would not be appropriate.

"I cannot tell you beyond reasonable doubt what his motive was, but I did not want to be kissed – chaste kisses, but I did not want to be kissed by a male staff member as I went about my daily life. I didn't want it and I didn't like it."

'I was frozen by fear'

The principal of Gordonstoun, Lisa Kerr, gave evidence to the inquiry in March and apologised on behalf of the school to those who had suffered abuse, saying: "I'd like to offer a very sincere apology to anyone who has suffered abuse either at Gordonstoun or Aberlour House."

Another former Gordonstoun pupil later told the inquiry he had been "haunted by fear" ever since a teacher made him remove his top while in his house to rub massage oil onto him, under the pretence of practising for his fiancée ahead of his upcoming wedding.

The witness, using the pseudonym Bob, described himself as a "shy, awkward and sensitive child", and said the teacher had identified him as a loner and "just seemed interested in me which, at the time, was very unusual".

Bob told the inquiry he was invited into the teacher's bedroom and said: "I knew something terrible was going to happen but I was frozen by fear.

"I was able to leave before anything worse happened. I did leave and never returned."

He also described a "culture of fear" at the school, recalling being bullied by one specific pupil with incidents including being made to hang from hot water pipes with a knife to his genitals so he could not let go.

Breaking down in tears when asked to describe how it made him feel, Bob said: "Honesty? Terrified and worthless."

The inquiry, before Judge Lady Smith, continues.

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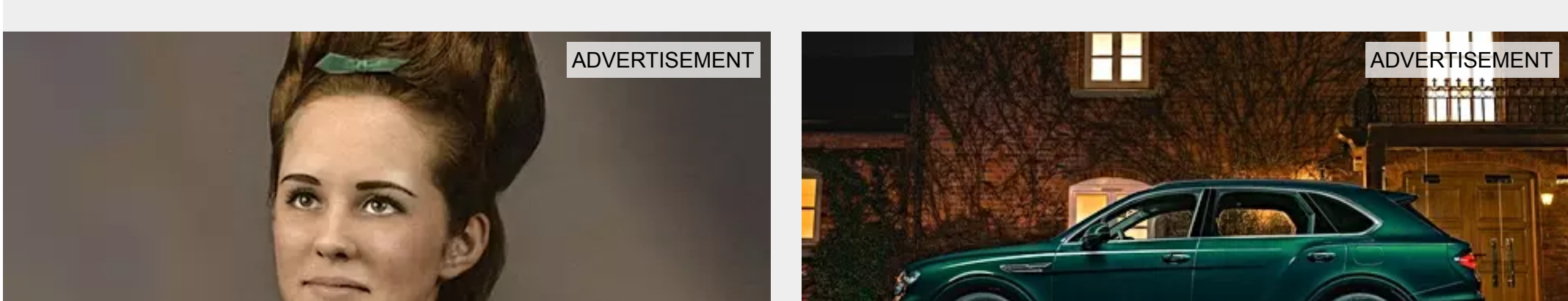
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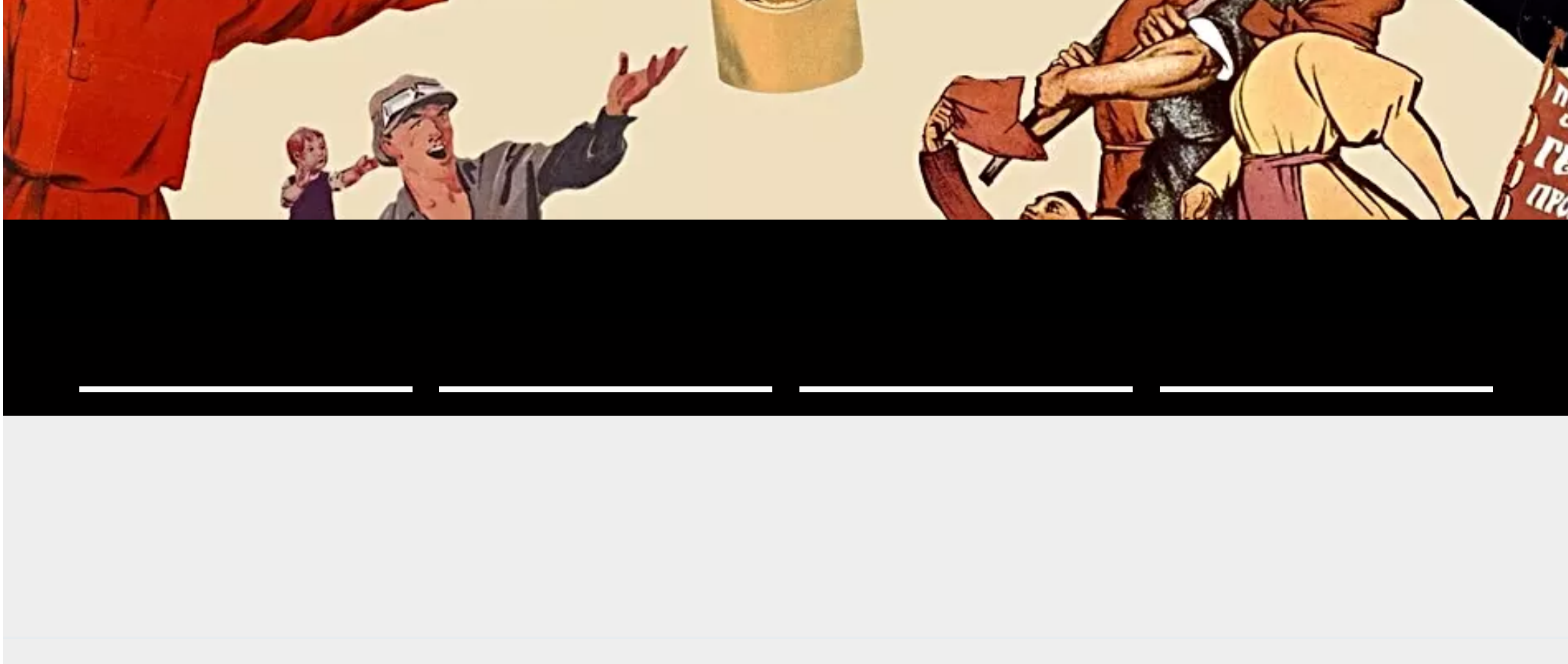
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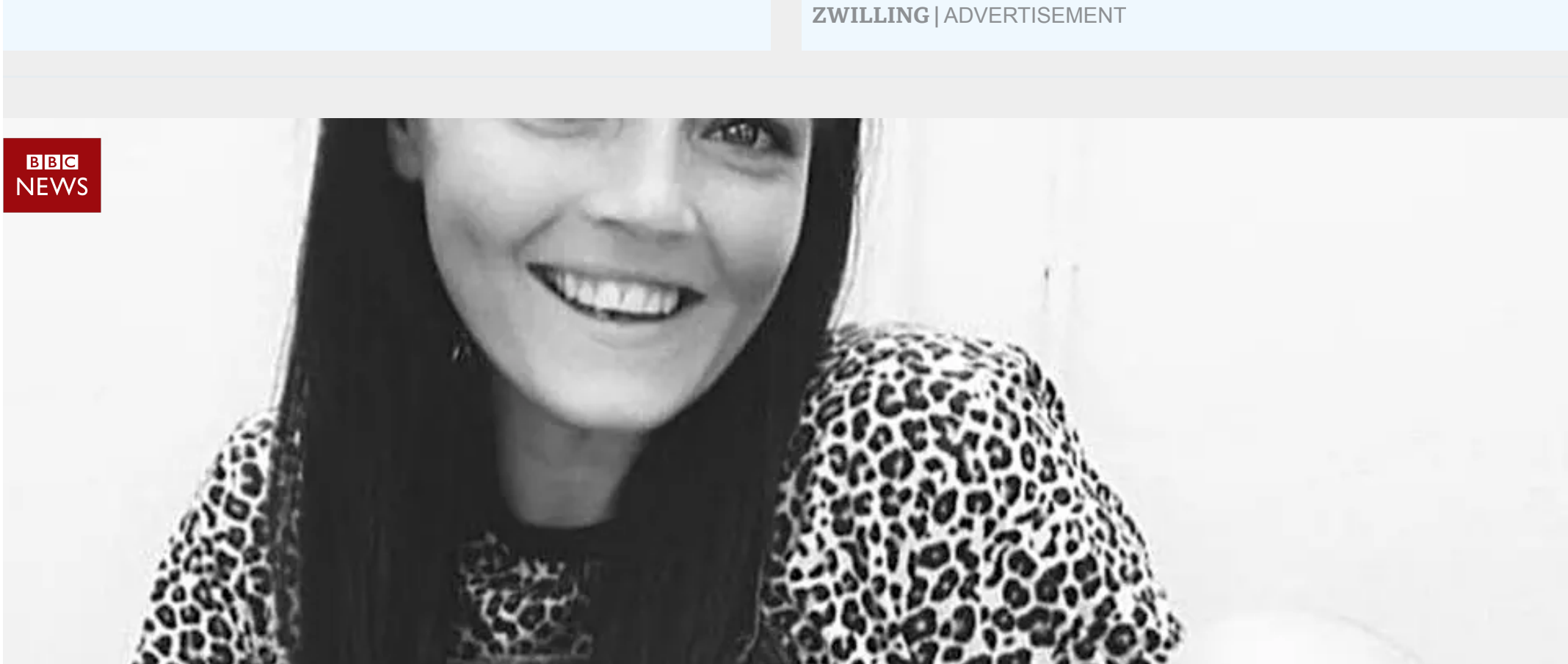
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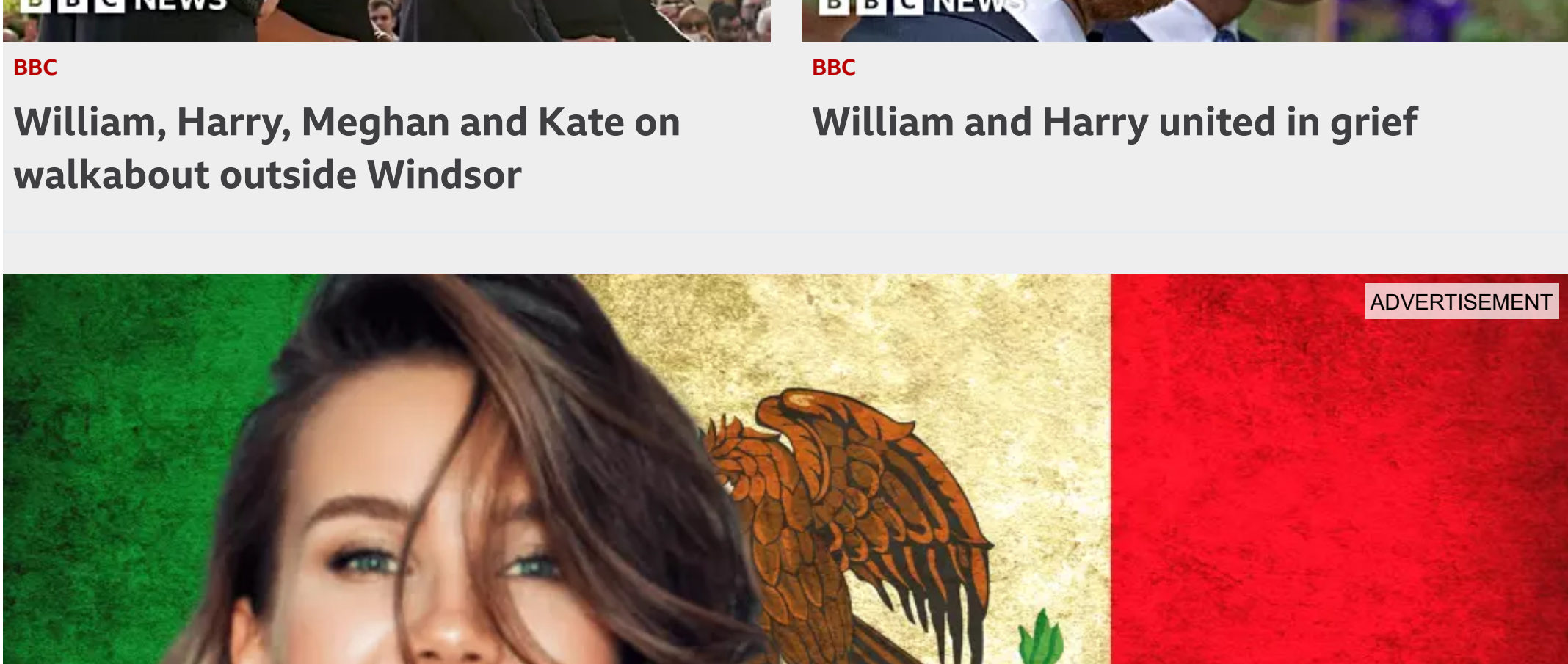
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